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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

STRUCTURES

New Program Promotes Innovative Bridge Materials and Technologies

The Innovative Bridge Research and Construction (IBRC) Program provides direction and funding to accelerate the adoption of innovative materials—such as high-performance concrete and steel, aluminum, and fiber-reinforced polymers—and technologies for bridge repair and construction. This 6-year program, administered by FHWA's Office of Bridge Technology, promotes the use of innovative materials and technologies on bridges to reduce maintenance and life-cycle costs, ease construction time and traffic congestion, and increase the ability of bridges to withstand natural disasters, including alternatives for seismic retrofitting. The program also promotes close partnerships with States, localities, and industry in meeting its goals.

Using high-performance concrete and steel, aluminum, and fiber-reinforced polymer can reduce maintenance and life-cycle costs, ease construction time and traffic congestion, and increase the ability of bridges to withstand natural disasters.

The Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) funds IBRC technology deployment through research, development, and technology transfer activities and through grants to State DOTs for repair and construction. The total annual grant program ranges from $10 to $20 million. DOTs can nominate bridge projects and use IBRC funding to help defray the cost of incorporating innovative materials in their bridge projects. An important component of IBRC is the opportunity to establish design and evaluation criteria for innovative materials and technologies.

The FY 1998-1999 solicitation for candidate projects attracted 111 nominations. Sixty projects were identified as well-qualified for funding. The FY 2000 solicitation was published April 1, 1999. For information on the IBRC program and projects funded, visit *www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge.*—

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